

## GREAT GARDEN CONVERSATION PIECE

# Do-It-Yourself Tire "Sunflower"

"It makes a great conversation piece for our garden," say Robert and Alice Tupper, Canton, S. Dak., about the garden "sunflower" they made out of a pair of old bias ply tires.

The unusual planter stands in the middle of their garden, planted with a bed of colorful petunias. It was made out of two old auto tires, a steel wheel, a 4-in. dia. wood post, and a few pieces of strap iron.

"We used chalk to mark petal shapes on one side of the tire that run from the tread to the bead," explains Robert. "A little soap suds smeared along the cutting line makes the sidewall easier to cut. We used a coarse-toothed saber saw but a stiff short blade knife will do the same job if the knife is sharp and the line is kept wet with soap solution.

"The next step is to turn the tire inside out by pushing the remaining bead through the center of the tire. We then took our wheel rim and inside out tire to a service station where they mounted it on the rim.

"To attach the rim to the top of the post, we welded 8 lengths of strap iron to the top and bottom of the rim for mounting brackets. Then we set the post and tire in our garden and nailed four rubber "leaves" cut out of the second tire to the post below the tire. The final step was to paint the post and tire green to give it a "natural" look. Yellow paint on the tops of the petals makes it almost look like a real sunflower.

"We put about 2 in. of marble size stone inside the tire to aid in draining and then filled it with dirt.

"Everyone who gets a look at our garden comments on the sunflower and wants to know where we got it."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Alice & Robert Tupper, 608 E. Elder, Canton, S. Dak. 57013 (ph 605 987-5666).



Top photo shows completed "sunflower", which is painted green and mounts on a wood post. Photo above shows Robert Tupper cutting out petals for a new sunflower with a saber saw.



Mature mini-Hereford, right, is an almost exact replica of its bigger, full-size cousin.

**FULL GROWN ANIMALS STAND UNDER  
40 IN. TALL AND WEIGH LESS THAN 700 LBS.**

## This Texan Breeds "Mini" Hereford Cattle

"I can raise 25% more beef on the same pasture with my miniature Herefords than with full-size cattle. They gain much more efficiently and reach market weight sooner than conventional size cattle," says Rust Largent, Fort Davis, Texas, who breeds mini Herefords that measure less than 40 in. tall and weigh under 700 lbs.

Largent has been breeding cattle for reduced size since 1970 in an effort to increase weight gain efficiency. His mini Hereford program kicked into high gear in 1980 when a bull was born with genetics that allowed the herd's frame size to be reduced at a phenomenal rate. Largent decided to continue reducing size, using an inbreeding program from five different bloodlines of the original herd. His 115-cow herd includes some cows that are less than 38 in. tall and weigh less than 500 lbs. - and size has been decreasing by as much as 3 in. in one generation. Largent keeps the heifers and feeds out the steers to prime or choice grade, selling them to individuals in his area.

"As far as I know my mini Herefords are the smallest registered Herefords in the world," says Largent, who has his entire herd registered with the American Hereford Association. "There's no dwarfism in the bloodlines of my mini Herefords, and there have been no reproductive problems or throwbacks to larger animals either."

Largent says some people consider his mini Herefords a novelty, but he considers them practical and economical. "Mini Herefords can reach prime or choice grade at 14 months when they're fed for market. It takes a conventional size steer 20 to 22 months or longer," says Largent. "Because mini Herefords don't have to be fed nearly as long to make choice grade, you can start feeding them a high corn ration sooner."

According to Largent, his cattle have a higher calf-to-cow weight ratio (percentage of calf weight to cow weight at weaning time). "Texas A & M University says that the national average calf to cow weight ratio is 35 to 40% compared to 65% for my mini Herefords. Texas A & M also says a cow's total nutritional intake is directly proportional to its body weight. If that's true, then two 500-lb. cows eat no more than one 1,200-lb. cow. The 1,200-lb. cow puts on more weight, but not more efficiently. The combination of the higher calf-to-cow weight ratio and equality of nutritional intake allows mini Herefords to produce 25% or more beef from a given pasture."

Largent started selling breeding animals earlier this year.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, R. Rust Largent, Point of Rocks Ranch, Rt. 1, Box 20, Fort Davis, Texas 79734 (ph 915 426-3330).

## BUTTER CHURNS COME IN AN AMAZING VARIETY OF TYPES, SIZES

# He Collects Kitchen Tool He Used To Hate

By Dianne L. Beetler

Traditionally, children have enjoyed Saturdays because they didn't have to attend school. Not Bill Maloney. He hated Saturdays because he had to help his mother churn butter.

Bill grew up to be a farm implement dealer in Avon, Ill., but he didn't limit his wheeling and dealing to machinery. Years ago, he decided collecting churns was a "butter" idea than using them, and he has focused on the cream of the crop.

He owns churns made of tin, pine, granite, glass, stoneware, marble, porcelain, spongeware and many other materials.

Dasher churns are well-known, but Bill also has a pump churn, a cylinder churn, a churn operated by a foot pedal, a swing churn, and a treadmill churn. The latter was powered by a dog or a sheep walking on a treadwell.

Bill's collection contains a rectangular shaker churn, a cube-shaped churn and a barrel churn. One churn holds 15 gal. of cream, and another is the size of a quart jar.

"My favorite is a blue porcelain churn 100 years old," Bill says. It's the oldest churn in his collection.

Although butter churns date back to the 15th century, buttermaking did not become popular in America until almost 300 years later. The first recorded use of butter churns in the U.S. was in 1644. The first cows had been imported 20 years earlier, but they were used mainly for milk.

When Americans did begin making butter, they churned it at home. They used home-made churns, too, and as a result, these early churns vary in design and size.

The plunger churn is one of the earliest types. Made like a barrel with staves and

hoops, plunger churns also were called "broomstick churns" because the plunger resembled a broomstick. Attached to the bottom of the plunger were four paddles with holes for churning the butter.

A simple tin churn, called a "piggy", because of its shape, hung on a hook from the ceiling or wall and could be swung back and forth until the cream turned to butter.

The pump churn operated by pumping the handle up and down, and the barrel churn was simply a mounted barrel turned by a handle at one end.

Wood churns were the most popular, and oak was a preferred wood because it would not give the butter a bitter taste or strange smell.

Churns came in all shapes - round, square, cylindrical, cube, diamond and others, and they ranged in size from 3 pints to 60 gal.

The smaller churns could be operated on a tabletop or in the lap.

During the latter part of the 19th century, churns were made in factories. Eventually motors powered the churns. After butter production moved out of the home, churns and other tools associated with buttermaking became collectibles.

But there's one thing Bill doesn't do - churn butter. He'd rather spend his Saturdays looking for additions to his collection. After all, another churn may be just down the road a ways.

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